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Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson
Michigan Dept. of State
430 W. Allegan
Lansing, Michigan 48918

Dear Sec. Benson,

I was recently informed that you had initiated changes in the election process and wanted to congratulate you for your initiative in addressing the deficiencies highlighted in our most recent election cycle. Election integrity is a personal interest of mine, given current service as the Chairman of the Oceana County Board of Canvassers and has led me to several reasons for writing.

First, in March 2020, I was asked to give a presentation on the current state of elections in Oceana County to the Board of Commissioners. This interest was prompted by a free for all, out of control process, highlighted by the national media in their coverage of the Iowa primary. As a result of that inquiry, I was determined that the process within our county would be above reproach. The presentation detailed the current state, future state and a road map to restoring integrity.

Second, in keeping with this promise, I became fully engaged in the election process and began to see the deficiencies in our own county and throughout the

state. It began with an assessment of the role of the board of canvassers. Its charter and mission most likely began as a solid check and balance approach but degraded over time to become nothing more than a rubber stamp. In fact, many speak of the board as if it is an official certification process but in all sincerity, it is essentially a rubber stamp or at best equivalent to a bank reconciliation process. These deficiencies and more were found to be totally unacceptable and were highlighted by comments made from poll watchers in the TCF facility.

Third, since the deficiencies were substantial and the time short between the primary and the general election in November, it was clear that it would only get worse. What also became clear was that there was little visible evidence that changes would be made by your office. This was borne out by the election in November which became a complete disaster for our state. Your mass mailings of absentee ballot request finished off any chance of election security.

Fourth, this in no way is to place the total blame for our poor election at your feet although I personally believe that you played a significant role in its demise. The fact that it has been reported, that you altered the Qualified Voter File (QVF), after previous secretaries had made significant improvements, has left a large question as to why. The fact that you have a contract with a company called Voterworks.com as part of an audit basis that allows bypassing the security of the QVF and leaves the entire system vulnerable. The fact that you have not worked to secure reciprocal agreements with every other state within the United States to ensure constant and up to date electronic voter files is inexcusable.

Fifth, the fact that you did not intercede in a flawed system in the Wayne County debacle indicated total negligence especially after being advised by poll watchers and other election officials such as Bob Cushman, Monica Palmer, Bill Hartman and Patrick Colbeck. Several of these individuals were interviewed on national media and clearly highlighted the issue at hand. Yet, you continued the negligence by stating the election probe was an "Embarrassment". An embarrassment where I gave testimony before the Michigan Senate Oversight Committee as to the deficiencies discovered.

Sixth, I would be remiss if I didn't also criticize our legislators for their disgraceful role as well. Michigan lost its stature throughout the land at a time when the entire nation's eyes were upon us. A loss emphasized by a lack of logic and leadership. Since the election in November, I have heard volumes of words from both sides with little or no action. The legislature has promised swift action and of course your recent words were in a similar vein however, swift does not mean next year. Even our own Congressman Huizenga didn't believe the system was faulty and stated publicly he didn't see any significant levels of fraud. Funny because fraud at any level should have shut down the entire process. The Constitution clearly states measures to follow in situations such as these but our own legislature failed us! I am a problem solver and offered to be part of the solution but to date no one has heeded my offer. Using methodical problem solving tools and a team of skilled professionals, I believe we can tackle the problem head on and offer our electorate a secure election system that can serve as a model to the nation.

Seventh, given these deficiencies and a lack of serious candor in addressing the emergency at hand, I am informing you of the requirement for a verified corrective action and a Poke Yoke to assure our electorate that we will not see a repeat of these disastrous consequences. I cannot, in good conscience, certify nor be a participant in another election as the Chairman or as a member of the Oceana County Board of Canvassers as long as you and the legislature remain disengaged in solving this crucial dilemma. There can be no greater urgency going forward with all of our reputations at risk in the eyes of the electorate.

Finally, as a member of the 6 plaintiff lawsuit known generically as "The Kraken" currently before the Supreme Court of the United States, all of this may be moot given their direction however, I believe that collectively we could attack this problem in a very rapid and bipartisan way before the next election. Other counties, where I have spoken, have expressed similar feelings and will be engaging this action as well. I look forward to your thoughts and response and will be copying other stakeholders as well. The time for action is NOW!

Respectively Submitted,

Chuck

Charles J. Ritchard,

Chairman of the Oceana County Board of Canvassers